

REPORT ON THE MASTER THESIS

IEPS – International Economic and Political Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University

Title of the thesis:	Means to an End – Arab Spring
Author of the thesis:	Stefan Tanev
Referee (incl. titles):	Mgr. Martin Riegl, Ph.D.

Remark: It is a standard at the FSV UK that the Referee's Report is at least 500 words long. In case you will assess the thesis as "non-defendable", please explain the concrete reasons for that in detail.

SUMMARY OF POINTS AWARDED (for details, see below):

CATEGORY	POINTS
<i>Theoretical background (max. 20)</i>	15
<i>Contribution (max. 20)</i>	5
<i>Methods (max. 20)</i>	5
<i>Literature (max. 20)</i>	6
<i>Manuscript form (max. 20)</i>	6
TOTAL POINTS (max. 100)	37
The proposed grade (1-2-3-4)	4

You can even use a decimal point (e.g. giving the grade of 2.5 for 60 points).

Comments of the referee on the thesis highlights and shortcomings (following the 5 numbered aspects of your assessment indicated below).

1) Theoretical background: Author framed his research within the Critical theory with a particular focus on Frankfurt school and neo-Marxism and uses the works of I.Berlin, K.Marx, I.Kant or J.Habermas.

2) Contribution: The objective of this thesis is to explain how affective the Arab Spring was in different Arab countries, namely in Tunisia, Libya, Egypt and Syria. Although the project itself is promising, it can not be stated that the author narrowed his focus on Egypt. The submitted thesis reads like a seminar paper than comprehensive comparative analyses of the chosen topic. It shows numerous weak points since it very beginning. First of all the introduction is completely missing, so the reader is left to reckon what the main goal of the thesis is, what is the research question etc. Unfortunately other problems quickly follow. The first chapter dedicated to definition of democracy ignores major authors (Zakaria, Dahl, Tocqueville, Talmon). Furthermore one simply can't agree with author's definition of comparative politics (P 14 L 6), which has much broader meaning. Other parts of the thesis do not have anything to do with academic work such as master level thesis: *The Tunisian people are on average very intelligent...* (P 17, par. 2) Terminology also shows serious deficiencies when authors describes Syria and Libya as totalitarian regimes, sic! (P 18, L1-2). Other statements are simply wrong such as Muslim brotherhood becoming part of the ISIS (P18). I would also recommend to use footnotes as such paragraphs are just redundant (description of Egyptian political system – P25, elections results P31-36).

3) Methods: Author declares to use comparative method which is however barely used throughout the thesis as the author narrowed his topic to case study of the Egyptian Arab spring. The promised comparison of countries outlined in the project is virtually missing.

4) Literature: I would recommend to do further literature review as some leadings authors are missing, e.g. Fareed Zakaria's work on liberal democracy (or literature dealing with Democratic Peace Theory) would be helpful, especially in the first chapter dealing with the conceptualization of the phenomenon of democracy. The list of sources seems to be rather a random pick of literature available in the library.

5) Manuscript form: The structure of the thesis does not meet standards required by Faculty of Social Sciences, the scope of the paper is very limited, misspellings or typos occur too often throughout the paper. More seriously many statements seem to be author's subjective perceptions rather than based on relevant data/sources (e.g. P11, L 13). Sorry for harshment of my comments but it is necessary to revise and resubmit the thesis, I also strongly recommend regular consultations as I had not a simple chance to see the thesis before its submission.

DATE OF EVALUATION: 26.1. 2016

Referee Signature

The referee should give comments to the following requirements:

1) THEORETICAL BACKGROUND: Can you recognize that the thesis was guided by some **theoretical fundamentals** relevant for this thesis topic? Were some important theoretical concepts omitted? Was the theory used in the thesis consistently incorporated with the topic and hypotheses tested?

Strong Average Weak
20 10 0 points

2) CONTRIBUTION: Evaluate if the author presents **original ideas** on the topic and aims at demonstrating **critical thinking** and ability to draw conclusions based on the knowledge of relevant theory and relevant empirical material. Is there a distinct **value added** of the thesis (relative to knowledge of a university-educated person interested in given topic)? Did the author explain **why** the observed phenomena occurred? Were the policy implications well founded?

Strong Average Weak
20 10 0 points

3) METHODS: Are the **hypotheses** for this study clearly stated, allowing their further verification and testing? Are the theoretical explanations, empirical material and **analytical tools** used in the thesis relevant to the research question being investigated, and adequate to the aspiration level of the study? Is the thesis **topic comprehensively analyzed** and does the thesis not make trivial or irrelevant detours off the main body stated in the thesis proposal? More than 10 points signal an exceptional work, **which requires your explanation "why" it is so**.

Strong Average Weak
20 10 0 points

4) LITERATURE REVIEW: The thesis demonstrates author's full understanding and **command of recent literature**. The author quotes relevant literature in a proper way and disposes with a representative bibliography. (Remark: references to Wikipedia, websites and newspaper articles are a sign of **poor research**). If they dominate you cannot give more than 8 points. References to books published by prestigious publishers and articles in renowned journals give much better impression.

Strong Average Weak
20 10 0 points

5) MANUSCRIPT FORM: The thesis is **clear and well structured**. The author uses appropriate language and style, including academic **format** for quotations, graphs and tables. The text effectively refers to graphs and tables, is easily readable and **stimulates thinking**.

Strong Average Weak
20 10 0 points

Overall grading scheme at FSV UK:

TOTAL POINTS	GRADE	Czech grading	US grading
81 – 100	1	= excellent	= A
61 – 80	2	= good	= B
51 – 60	3	= satisfactory	= C
41 – 50	3	= satisfactory	= D
0 – 40	4	= fail	= not recommended for defence